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EDITED BY

JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, B.D.

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THE CATECHISM

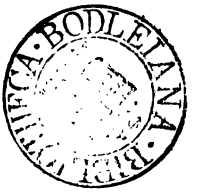
AND LITURGY

BY THE EDITOR

J. P. NORRIS, B.D.

CANON OF BRISTOL

SECOND YEAR'S COURSE



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LESSON I.

THE readers for whom this Manual is intended are probably being prepared, or hoping soon to be prepared, for *Confirmation.*

We will, therefore, in this course of lessons include "The Order of Confirmation," as set forth in our Prayer Book; and, by way of preparation for it, continue our elementary study of the Catechism.

In last year's Manual we went through the Catechism to the end of the Lord's Prayer. We have now before us that latter portion, added after the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, containing some elementary teaching on the two Sacraments.

One Sacrament, Holy Baptism, you have received already; and of its obligations you will be solemnly reminded at your Confirmation. To the other Sacrament—Holy Communion—Confirmation will admit you.

These questions and answers of our Catechism about the two Sacraments are, therefore, most fit matter to occupy your thoughts by way of introduction to the Confirmation Service.

First make sure that you understand the language of this portion of the Catechism.

How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained (or instituted) in His Church?

You answer, "Two only"—Christ hath ordained *two* Sacraments only, "*as generally necessary to Salvation*, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord."

There are two words here that need explanation: *generally* and *Salvation.*

The word "*generally*" has come now-a-days to mean "in most cases, though not in all;" so that "generally necessary" might now seem to be less strong than "necessary."

This was *not* the meaning of the word, however, when the Catechism was written. "*Generally*" in those days was always used in its correct sense, and shewed that what followed was of *general* application, —applying, not to *some* cases only, but to *all* cases.

Thus, then, it could not for one moment be said that Marriage or Ordination (which are sometimes accounted Sacraments) were "generally" necessary. Two Sacraments, and two only, are "generally" necessary, in this proper sense of the term, namely, necessary for all sorts of Christians equally,—Baptism and (when of ripe age) the Lord's Supper.

But is it really meant (you may ask) that they are so necessary to salvation, that a man cannot be saved without them?

Here you are slipping back into the common error about the word "*saved*" and "*salvation*" which we tried to correct in our first Manual. These words have come to be used popularly with reference to our *future* state: but in the Catechism and in the Prayer Book, and indeed in the New Testament also, these words

nearly always relate to a man's *present* state : a man is said to be "*saved*" who is *now in a state of salvation.* When St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians about "the preaching of the Cross," says (1 Cor. i. 18), "Unto us *who are saved* it is the power of God," he does not mean "*who will be saved.*" And when again in his second Epistle (2 Cor. vi. 2) he says, "*Now* is the day of salvation," he means exactly what he says, that the Corinthians might *that very day* enter into a state of salvation. In the Apostle's point of view, and in the Prayer Book point of view, one who is a sincere member of Christ's Church is spoken of as being "*in a state of salvation.*" Whether he will be saved at the Last Day is known only to God :—of salvation in that *final* sense the Church speaks not here. But the Prayer Book declines to affirm of any that he is *now in a state of salvation,* unless he be in sincere communion with Christ's Church; and for this the two Sacraments are necessary. This being the meaning of Salvation, the word "necessary" is not too strong.

"What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?"

"I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us,"—you must be careful to make the pause here, connecting the words "given unto us" with "grace."

And by the word "*grace*" here, we do not mean *favour.* "Grace" here, clearly has another meaning, namely, a *gift* of some kind, an inward and spiritual gift; what it is we shall see afterwards.

The answer goes on to say that this outward and visible sign must be one "ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same,"—as a means by which we receive the inward and spiritual grace—

"and a pledge to assure us thereof,"—for the gift being an invisible one we need some outward pledge that we do actually receive it.

Now we come to *Baptism.* The word means originally the act of *dipping* in water, or of *pouring* water *over* any person or thing.

There are some words that require explanation; we will notice them in order.

"Death unto sin," and "new Birth unto righteousness:"—

This phrase, "*death unto sin,*" may be understood by the help of an illustration. An emigrant who renounces his old country and begins life afresh in one of our colonies, might be said to be *dead to* his old country. And the phrase might equally be applied to him if he were transplanted from one country into the other in his infancy. So then, one who is baptized is transplanted out of an element of sin into an element of righteousness, and may be said from that day forth to be dead to the one element, and born anew into the other. This being the Divine intention of our Baptism (however far we fall short of fulfilling it in our after life), it is called "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."

"*Born in sin*" means born in a state of sin, with a tendency to sin within us, inherited from our parents.

Children of wrath, therefore, children of a fallen race, a race that is lying under God's displeasure—*in disgrace.*

Children of grace, children taken into the Heavenly Father's favour again. The word "grace" here has its more usual meaning—God's favour.

"The promises of God made to them in that Sacra-

ment:"—the Sacrament is Baptism; God's promises are those mentioned at the beginning of the Catechism, namely, God's promise to make all who are brought to Him in Baptism "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven."

"Why, then, are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?"—cannot perform, what?—cannot perform these two requirements just mentioned, *repentance* and *faith.*

"Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

To make sure that you understand the words of the Catechism, it is a good plan sometimes to *parse* them, and so make your knowledge of grammar useful towards the right understanding of these carefully worded formularies. Here, for instance, we note that "promise" is used first as a *verb*, and then as a *noun.* It is helpful, too, to turn all the *pronouns* into the *nouns* for which they stand. Thus:—

Because the *infants* promise both *repentance* and *faith* by their (the infants') sureties; and when they (the infants) come to age, they are themselves bound to perform this promise.

Surety is another word for *Sponsor.* Sponsors give *surety* or *security* that the child shall be properly brought up.

This is one of their two duties. The other duty is to be the child's *mouthpiece*, as it were, in answering the minister's questions in Baptism,—thus putting certain vows upon the unconscious child. The two duties are quite distinct; and it is the latter that is here alluded to. Notice that the subject to the verb "promise" is

not the *sureties* but the *infants;* the infants make the promise by the voice of their sureties. If this were properly understood it would prevent the very common mistake that people fall into about Sponsors. People ignorantly suppose that godfathers and godmothers become bound for the children. They do nothing of the sort. It is the children who are bound from the very first. The godfathers and godmothers, in answering the clergyman's "questions," only consent that the child shall be so bound. And as soon as ever the child *comes to age, i.e.* comes to years of discretion—comes to be capable of what we call "responsibility,"—old enough to be a good child or a naughty child,—he is bound to begin to perform these promises.

We now pass on to the questions and answers about "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." The phrase "Lord's Supper" is St. Paul's phrase for the Holy Communion in 1 Cor. xi. 20. It is so called as being a commemoration of the Lord's Last Supper with His Apostles before His Crucifixion. It is also called the *Eucharist*, meaning *a thanksgiving service.* "Which we receive *thereby*," meaning "by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ."

"Verily and indeed taken and received:"—notice how the assertion is strengthened by these repetitions. "Verily and indeed"—truly and really; not in a figure only or metaphorically. "Taken and received:"—meaning that we are *active* as well as *passive* recipients. We shall see the importance of this precise language hereafter.

"By the faithful:"—meaning not "by Christians" merely, but by *faithful* Christians.

That this further limitation is intended is shown by the wording of the last answer of the Catechism, where "a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ" is mentioned as necessary on the part of all who wish to benefit by the Lord's Supper. One of the Thirty-nine Articles makes this still more plain; but of that presently.

"The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine." Here again it is useful to complete the grammar of the sentence: "as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine."

In the last answer too, a mistake is often made in allowing children to insert "*to*" before "*have*" and "*be*," whereas these latter verbs are not *infinitive* but *subjunctive*:—"whether they repent them,"—"whether they have,"—"whether they be."

To "*be in charity with all men*," is to have no unforgiving thoughts of any.

With these few explanations in our minds we may, in our next Lesson, go on to consider and make our own our Church's teaching about these two Sacraments.

To-day we will conclude with a prayer that God will enable us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" these familiar words of our Catechism; and so prepare us to understand the responsibility and blessedness of our approaching Confirmation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

LESSON II.

WE will now go back to the opening question about these Sacraments: "How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church?"

Once, and once only, before has the word "Church" occurred in the Catechism; and that was in the Apostles' Creed, where we profess to believe in "the Holy Catholic Church." What was said there need not be here repeated. Only remember the necessary connexion between the Church and the Sacraments. Without Sacraments there could be no Church; without the Church there could be no Sacraments. It is the Sacraments that bind us together into a Church. One Sacrament admits us into her Communion; the other keeps us in her Communion. St. Paul, in the tenth chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, sees in the Israelites in the wilderness a foreshadowing of the Christian Church; and what are the resemblances that he points to? He says, Those Israelites had all been baptized (in the Red Sea); and those Israelites had all a heavenly meat and drink supplied to them: pointing, you see, to these two things as the marks or signs of a Church, and shewing that the Israelites had them in some sort—typically, at any rate.

Our Christian Sacraments are "ordained by Christ

Himself." This you can shew at once from the New Testament. Turn to the 28th chapter of St. Matthew. You there find our Lord laying His last commands upon His Apostles; and what are they? "Go ye and teach all nations," or rather, as it is given in the margin, "make disciples or Christians of all nations,"—how? by "baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

And in St. Mark you find that our Lord added, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

The meaning of this last word, "*saved*," has already been explained.

Here, then, in Christ's last charge to His Apostles, we have the Sacrament of Baptism expressly ordained.

The other Sacrament was ordained by Christ at His last Supper, the night before His Crucifixion. We have four separate accounts of the institution—St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Luke's, and St. Paul's—shewing what importance the Apostles attached to it. They tell us how Christ took the bread, and when He had given thanks, brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is My Body: do this in remembrance of Me." And then the cup, blessing it and giving it to them, and saying, "Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins;" "Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Now, in the whole course of the Gospel narrative we find no other outward ordinance enjoined upon the Church except these two; unless indeed it be the washing of one another's feet, when Christ said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given

you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 14).

Only between this washing of the feet and those other two institutions, there was this broad difference, that with this washing of feet no special grace was connected; whereas in those other two there was. Of Baptism, we are told repeatedly in Scripture that when done in faith it is accompanied by the remission of sins. And of the outward sign in the Lord's Supper, St. Paul tells us that the Bread is the Communion (makes us partakers) of the Body of Christ, and the Cup is the Communion (makes us partakers) of His Blood. Clearly, in both cases, a spiritual value is given to the acts, which was wanting in the case of the feet-washing. Our Church, therefore, is warranted in saying that two Sacraments, and two only, were ordained by Christ Himself, "as generally necessary to salvation," viz., "Baptism and the Supper of the Lord."

These words, "as generally necessary to salvation," have already been partly explained in our first Lesson. It only remains now to justify them from Scripture. This may be readily done.

Take Baptism first. In St. Mark xvi. 16 we find our Lord saying, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

This surely justifies the Catechism in asserting that Baptism is "necessary to salvation," always remembering that the word "salvation" here must have the same meaning that "saved" had in our Lord's phrase, namely, admission into *a present state of salvation.* If a man wish to enter into this state of salvation, Baptism is necessary; the Church knows no other mode of entrance.

If additional warranty for this assertion be desired, it may be found in the conversation with Nicodemus in John iii. Nicodemus there comes to Jesus desiring to be admitted into the kingdom of God *secretly*, without any public profession. But Christ replies that this may not be. "Except a man be born *of water*, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In other words, "The outward and visible sign, as well as the inward and spiritual grace, is necessary for admission into this state of salvation."

We pass to the other Sacrament. Does Scripture justify equally the assertion that the Holy Communion is necessary to salvation?

In the sixth chapter of St. John we find our Lord affirming that, without a certain inward and spiritual act (which He describes as "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man") we *can have no life in us*. And twelve months afterwards, on the evening before His death, we find our Lord very solemnly connecting this inward and spiritual act (the act of feeding on Christ) with an outward and visible act, which He then commanded Christians to repeat continually in remembrance of Him. Such, in brief, is the Scriptural account of the institution of Holy Communion. And can any one reading it hesitate to say that compliance with this command is necessary to salvation—necessary to a Christian if he wishes to be in a state of salvation?

Accordingly, the Catechism speaks of both these Sacraments being "generally necessary to salvation."

The next question tells us what constitutes a Sacrament: "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?"

The answer gives us an admirable definition, applying equally to Baptism and to the Lord's Supper.

A Sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us,—ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same,—and a pledge to assure us thereof."

Observe, there are five things here to be noted in a Sacrament.

1. There must be "an outward and visible sign;" something external to us, which we can see with our eyes.

2. There must be "an inward and spiritual grace given unto us;" as this gift is inward and spiritual, it must be a matter of *faith*, and there must, therefore, be some distinct promise on which our faith may rest.

3. The sign must have been "ordained by Christ Himself."

4. The sign must be not only a sign of the grace, but also "a means whereby we receive" the grace.

5. And it must be "a pledge to assure us thereof;" that is, of such a sort as to give us a comfortable assurance that we do really receive that inward gift of grace.

When, in the two following Lessons, we proceed to the consideration of the Sacraments separately, we shall see how entirely each of them fulfils these five conditions.

We are now concerned with Sacraments in general. And the next question is, "How many parts are there in a Sacrament?" And the answer is, "Two; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace."

In this answer, you see, the Catechism calls special attention to the first and second of the five points

already enumerated. There must be an outward sign; there must be an inward gift of grace; else there can be no Sacrament. The three remaining points fix the connexion of the two, one with another:—They were connected *by Christ* Himself; the one is the *means* of the other; the one is a *pledge* of the other.

We may, or we may not, be able to give a clear account of this connexion to ourselves. But one thing is absolutely essential—that we firmly grasp the notion that a *Sacrament is made up of two things;* and that, of these two things, one is outward, to be perceived by the senses; the other inward—a thing to be believed.

The two must not be supposed to be merged into one. If we once allow our minds to blend or confuse the two, we shall be led into error.

We shall see this more plainly in the Lessons that follow.

O Blessed Lord, Who hast given Thy Church the comfort of outward means and pledges of that inward grace whereby Thou dost work within us, enable us, we pray Thee, faithfully to receive these Thy Sacraments, and thereby to be joined unto Thy Church in holy Communion, and so united unto Thee, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever livest and reignest. Amen.

LESSON III.

WE now come to the Sacrament of Baptism.

Being a Sacrament, it must be made up of those two parts which constitute a Sacrament,—an outward sign and an inward grace. "What is the outward and visible sign or form in Baptism?"

You answer, "Water; wherein the person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Mark every word here. And first, *Water*. It must be water; no other liquid may be substituted. *Christ* doubtless might have substituted any other element, but *we* may not. And Christ's motive in choosing water is evident: it is everywhere to be had, and it symbolizes *cleansing* or purification. This then is the first note of Baptism being a Sacrament, there is an outward and visible sign—observe also (by the way) that the word *person* is used, not *infant*. The Catechism clearly wishes to treat the doctrine of Baptism, first as it is applied to *adults*, and afterwards to pass to the case of *infants*. This is in every way convenient; enabling us (as we shall see) to approach it from the Scripture point of view.

We have also to note that in connexion with this outward visible sign of Baptism, certain words are to be

used by our Lord's ordinance :—"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is the threefold Name under which God is to be known in the New Dispensation. The Name under which God was known in the Old Dispensation was "JEHOVAH :" revealing simply His Personality. Under the New Dispensation something further is revealed : —the Personality is a *threefold* Personality. Still *One God*, but in that *One God* we Christians are aware of *three Divine Persons*. Christians are baptized *into* the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For such is the force of the original phrase of our Lord :— admitted by Baptism *into* this further knowledge of God, the knowledge of God the Father Who has created us, the knowledge of God the Son Who hath redeemed us, the knowledge of God the Holy Ghost Who sanctifieth us. We are admitted, moreover, into a threefold Covenant with God, being *adopted* by the Father, *redeemed* by the Son, *sanctified* by the Spirit.

2. We now pass on to the *second* note of Baptism being a Sacrament. There is in it an inward and spiritual grace.

"What is the inward and spiritual grace?"

"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness ; for, being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grâce."

The meaning of these phrases we considered in our last Lesson. We must now consider the doctrine. The doctrine is twofold : the doctrine of *Original Sin* and the doctrine of *Regeneration*. The word *sin* may mean either *an act of sin*, or it may mean a *state of sinfulness*. In the phrase "original sin" the word is used in this latter sense. There is in all of us a *taint of*

nature which we inherit from Adam,—we come into the world children of a race on which God's displeasure rests—a fallen race. But God for Christ's sake receives back into His favour all who are baptized into the Christian Church. This is that *remission or forgiveness of sins* spoken of in the Creeds as given to us in Baptism. We are transplanted out of disgrace into grace. We have a new start given us, as it were. The cloud of displeasure is lifted off, and we enter on our Christian course in the sunshine of God's favour. God translates us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. i. 13). And as plants thrive best in sunshine, so does the Christian. The tendency to sin begins from that day forward to die within him, and a tendency to righteousness begins to grow within him. If you could take fifty baptized children and watch them closely for five or six years, and also take fifty unbaptized children, and watch them as closely, and compare the two groups, you would find far more efforts to be good in the former than in the latter. God's grace would be seen to be working in the one group far more than in the other group. It might not be so in every individual case; for in individual cases, alas, the grace of Baptism may be thwarted and hindered by the bad influences of the home. But if you could compare one whole group with the other whole group, the difference would be very evident.

You may say, "The difference is not due to Baptism, but to early training; the probability is that the fifty who were baptized belong to Christian homes, where good influences are brought to bear upon them, even in infancy, and hence those early efforts after goodness."

Even if this sufficed to explain it, still it would be God's grace and God's blessing working upon the child *indirectly*, through others, as God's Holy Spirit loves to work.

But close observers say that this does not suffice to explain it. Close observers tell us that seeds of good shew themselves continually in baptized children, *in spite of* the most unfavourable home influences; and so frequently is this the case that they are forced to the confession that there is working within the children themselves "an inward and spiritual grace." Rough, ungracious fathers have seen it in their young children, and have been softened by it when nothing else could soften them,—softened and forced to confess it,—and have hidden away their own vices out of their children's sight, as if they felt that they were in a holy presence.

This "inward and spiritual grace," discernible even in young children, is the grace of Baptism,—"a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness,"—testifying that, though by nature they were children of wrath like their fathers, yet they have been made by God's blessing in Baptism "children of grace."

It is grievous to think how often these movements of the Holy Spirit within them are thwarted and hindered, until at last (it may be) the old evil nature quite regains the mastery, and the grace of Baptism is all but lost and forfeited!

But even if it be so, still the "baptismal character" (as the old Fathers called it) rests upon them, meaning the responsibility of having been *once* in a state of salvation—*once* children of grace.

Before we pass on to the two remaining questions

about Baptism, it may be well to notice (what the Catechism in its brevity omits to notice) how it fulfils the other three notes or marks of a Sacrament.

3. "It was ordained by Christ Himself." Not only did Christ and His Apostles themselves baptize their followers on the banks of Jordan (John iv. 1), but, as we have already seen, Christ's last charge to His Apostles was that they should go and baptize men of all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19).

4. The outward sign—the dipping in water, or the pouring of water, with those prescribed words—is the *means* of the inward and spiritual grace, when done in faith; for Christ connected the two together by His express promise, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." This is Christ's promise:—"If you will do the outward thing, I will do the inward thing." One depends on the other; therefore one is rightly said to be the *means* of the other. This is expressed very briefly by the word "*hereby*" in the Catechism answer.

5. And lastly, it is a "pledge to assure us thereof." Christ's faithfulness to His covenant being certain, our fulfilment of our part is a pledge that He is fulfilling His part in every case.

The outward visible thing is a kind of signal, therefore, to all the bystanders that the inward invisible thing is then and there taking place.

Thus *Baptism* satisfies all the conditions of a Sacrament.

We now go forward to the next question of the Catechism: "What is required of persons to be baptized?"

Observe once more, it is *persons*, not *infants*. And

this purposely. In the first ages of the Church, it was *adults* rather than infants that came for baptism. Infant-baptism could not be the rule until two or three generations had passed by. Hence it is that the language of the Apostles about Baptism is suited to adult-baptism rather than to infant-baptism.

And the Catechism, desiring to ground all its teaching on Scripture, commences therefore with the doctrine of adult-baptism, and from that proceeds to the doctrine of infant-baptism.

This will explain the question and answer before us. "What is required of *persons* to be baptized?" And it is answered, "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament."

This answer seems to suppose that the persons in question are capable of repentance and faith. And, in point of fact, the Apostles always required some promise of repentance and faith in their converts before they baptized them. The Catechism, therefore, following the guidance of Scripture, lays down broadly the general rule that *repentance and faith are to be required of all persons before they can be baptized.*

But the obvious difficulty arises, "How can this general rule be adapted to the case of infants? In nineteen cases out of twenty in our day, those who are brought to baptism are mere infants. If repentance and faith be required, "why, then, are infants baptized, when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them"—that is, "cannot fulfil these two requirements"?

The question appears difficult to answer at first sight; but really the answer which the Church has

given to it, and acted upon, from the earliest ages, is a very simple one.

Go back to Holy Scripture: look again at the case of those adult converts, at the case of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, for instance. "Repent, and be baptized," St. Peter said; did he wait some weeks or days for *evidence* of their faith and repentance? No; he was satisfied with their *promise*, and baptized them that very day. Look again at the Eunuch (Acts viii. 36):—he was baptized within an hour or two of the moment when he had first heard the name of Christ; his faith and repentance were only an hour or two old; clearly St. Philip was content with his *promise*.[1] Look again at the household of Cornelius (Acts x. 48). St. Peter baptized the whole household on trust, as it were, believing in the sincerity of their promise. So St. Paul, in the case of the Philippian jailer: he and all his family were baptized "the same hour of the night" in which the earthquake happened. Clearly the Apostles, in all these cases, were content with a good promise—content to take the repentance and faith *on trust*, as it were.

The persons to be baptized *bound themselves* to repent and believe, and that sufficed.

In answer, then, to the question about *Infant-Baptism*, which, in the next generation, Christians had to consider, the Church simply said, "Why should not infants be bound as well as grown-up people? In legal matters they can be bound; their trustees sign contracts for them, and they are bound

[1] It is now admitted by almost all commentators that the verse (Acts viii. 37) was an interpolation, though a very early one. The argument above is perhaps all the stronger if we omit the verse.

by that signature as completely as if they had signed the deeds themselves. Why not so in religious matters?" So they bound them to repent and believe, others—spiritual trustees, as it were—saying the words for them.

This, then, has been for eighteen centuries the Church's practice, and it is expressed in the Catechism's answer:—Infants are baptized because they promise repentance and faith by the mouth of their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, they are themselves bound to perform—bound just as much as if they had promised it with their own lips.

Grant, O Lord, that as the dew of Thy blessing has been resting on me ever since my baptism, so I may hold myself bounden to live as a child of grace, renouncing sin, and placing all my faith and trust in Thee, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour.

LESSON IV.

THE teaching of the Church Catechism on the subject of the Lord's Supper is clear and precise.

The faithful communicant does two things concurrently[1]:—(1) He eats bread and drinks wine,—which is a very simple thing; (2) He feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ,—which is a very mysterious thing.

And these two things are kept distinct and separate from first to last; what is received from the clergyman being the sign, means, and pledge of what is received from Christ.

Premising this briefly, we may proceed to consider the questions and answers in detail.

"Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?"

"For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

The word "*remembrance*" is our Lord's own word:—"Do this" (He said) "in remembrance of Me."

This first therefore: it must be to us a "remembrance" of Christ. This takes us at once to Holy Scripture. What was Christ then doing, which He wished Christians thus to repeat "in remembrance" of Him?

He was eating His last Passover with His disciples in the upper chamber. He had taken pains to concentrate their attention on this last Supper as of the deepest importance. In previous years He had cele-

[1] "*Concurrently*" is Hooker's word, and has been helpful to many.

brated with them this greatest of the Jewish feasts. But this time He invested it with more solemnity than ever. "With desire I have desired" (He said) "to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15).

Why these more than usually impressive words? Because Christ was about to give to the meal a new and still more mysterious significance.

It had always in the Jewish Church commemorated a deliverance by the sacrifice of a Lamb. Christ purposed at this Supper to reveal to His disciples that *He* was the real Sacrifice, of which that Passover Lamb was but the type: and that the time had arrived for that Sacrifice to be accomplished. To make this plain, Christ took up the bread—the barley cake—which was on the table, and brake it, saying, "This is My Body;" and then the cup of wine, pouring it out, and saying, "This is My Blood" (or "This is the New Covenant in My Blood"), "which is shed for the remission of sins."

The Apostles could not fail to understand Him. As that bread was broken, so was His sacred Body to be sacrificed; as that wine was poured out, so was His sacred Blood to be shed on the morrow.

But this was not all. While thus consecrating the bread and wine by giving to them this deep and mysterious meaning, He bade His disciples all partake of them. They could not misunderstand Him. Even so were Christians to be partakers of the sacrifice of His Body and Blood, drawing all their spiritual strength from that sacrifice.

If they had doubted for one moment about His meaning, the recollection of those words He had spoken, twelve months before, in the Capernaum synagogue, must have removed their doubt and made all

clear. He had then said, "I am bread;" "I am the bread of life;" "I am the bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 35, 51).

He was now at this last Supper uttering the same deep truth over again, yet more emphatically, and connecting it for ever with an outward visible act that might be repeated.

The Apostles would be in no danger of lowering His meaning, as the Jews at Capernaum had lowered it to their own carnal level, asking "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" nor would they for one moment suppose that that thing in His hand was His flesh.

Moreover He said not, "this *becometh* My Body," or "this *becometh* to you My Blood," implying a change; but simply and clearly, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." As so often in Scripture, "I *am* the Bread of Life,"[1] "I *am* the True Vine,"[2] "Thou *art* a Rock"[3] (Peter), "Hagar *is* Mount Sinai,"[4] "That rock *was* Christ:"[5]—so now, "This is My Body, this is My Blood of the New Testament," calling the bread His Body, calling the wine His Blood.[6]

When the Apostles saw Him break off a piece of the bread and give it to each to eat, calling it His Body, they would understand at once that He was expressing outwardly what He was at that same moment doing inwardly and invisibly:—outwardly giving them mere bread and wine indeed, but inwardly putting into their hearts that mysterious gift of which He had so often spoken, His own spiritual substance. The Church's

[1] John vi. 35. [2] John xv. 1. [3] Matt. xvi. 18.
[4] Gal. iv. 25. [5] 1 Cor. x. 4. [6] Compare Heb. ix. 20.

faith, that this inward gift still accompanies the outward act, is unfolded in what follows in our Catechism, to which we now return.

Mark how carefully that first answer is worded:—

"For the continual remembrance,"—Christ's own word.

"Of the *sacrifice* of the Death of Christ." Christ, as we have seen, had stamped upon the bread and wine the idea of sacrifice by breaking the bread and pouring forth the wine.

"And of the benefits that we are partakers of:"—By making His disciples partake of the bread that He had broken, Christ taught them plainly that they were to partake in some beneficial way of His sacrifice.

"Thereby," by means of that death.

You see how very carefully the words of the Catechism are chosen to draw out the full meaning of the Lord's Supper as a *commemoration.*

We must never lose sight of the commemorative character of this Sacrament. We must never, when receiving it, or trying to understand it, allow ourselves to forget that Upper Chamber, that Paschal Feast, that eve of Good Friday.

But its commemorative meaning is not all. It is *a means of grace* as well as a *means of instruction.* When we receive it faithfully, we not only commemorate a *past* benefit, but we also receive a *present* benefit. Else it would not be a *Sacrament* in the full sense of the term.

To constitute it a Sacrament it must (as we have seen) fulfil five conditions; and all these are plainly fulfilled by our Holy Communion as now administered.

1. We retain the outward visible sign.

2. Christ still bestows (as we believe and actually experience) an inward and spiritual *gift.*

3. The Sacrament, as we now have it, was instituted by Christ Himself. Thank God, it has never been discontinued, has never had occasion to be re-instituted in the Church.

4. The outward visible sign is a *means* of our obtaining the inward and spiritual gift. Christ's promise and command connect the two together. If we omit the one, we have no right to expect the other. The one, therefore, is justly called "a means" of the other.

5. And lastly, the outward act is a *pledge* to us that we receive the inward gift. We are not left to the mere sentiment and pious hope that we feed on Christ. Our merciful Lord knew well what a comfort and help to faith it is to have some outward mark or sign to assure us of His inward operations; and therefore, for this reason also, He connected the inward gift with an outward act. Doing the outward act faithfully, we feel sure that Christ is there and then giving us the inward grace. He is certain to keep *His* part of the Covenant if we keep *our* part.

We may now consider carefully the teaching of the Catechism on this *sacramental* character of our Holy Communion.

"What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?"

"Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received."

The Catechism teaches us (as does the Prayer-Book Office) that from first to last the bread and wine continues to be bread and wine. It is bread and wine when it is placed upon the holy table, and it is *as bread and wine* that the Lord commanded it to be received, as the Catechism here declares. After the solemn

benediction of the cup, our Lord still spoke of it as wine; "This fruit of the vine," He continued to call it (Matt. xxvi. 29). So our consecration prayer, "We receiving these *Thy creatures of bread and wine.*" The bread and wine therefore continue to be simply bread and wine. But while we receive this outward and visible thing from Christ's minister, we are taught, and we believe, that we receive an inward and spiritual thing from Christ Himself.

"What is" that "inward part or thing signified?"

"The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

Every word here requires careful attention. "The Body and Blood of Christ." This it is which, all unseen, our souls are receiving from Christ. On what authority do we assert this? Chiefly on the authority of St. Paul's words in 1 Cor. x. 16. St. Paul is there shewing the Corinthians the shameful inconsistency of frequenting idolatrous feasts, while also joining in the Lord's Supper. For what is the Lord's Supper? "The cup of blessing which we bless"—what is it? "Is it not" (he says) "the Communion"—*i.e.* the means of communicating to us—"the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion"—*i.e.* the means of communicating to us—"the Body of Christ?"

Then the Catechism adds, "which are *verily* and *indeed*"—not in a figure only, but really and truly—"taken and received"—not received only, but *taken* and received, to shew that some active effort is needed on our part—we must put forth the hand of faith, as it were, else Christ will not give it—"by the faithful"—not by all, but by those only who have faith to

take and receive what Christ offers—"in the Lord's Supper."

Some think that "the faithful" here means all baptized Christians; but it is not so, for the 29th Article declares plainly that unfaithful Christians do not receive the Lord's Body and Blood, although they may outwardly go through the form of receiving the bread and wine. And this will appear still more plainly from the Consecration Prayer, in which we *pray* that those who receive the bread and wine *may* be partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ.

But first, what is meant by this Body and Blood of Christ which the faithful verily and indeed receive into their souls in the Lord's Supper? Here we reach the real mystery—a mystery of which we may know the blessedness, though we understand it not.

Enough for us to believe that there is a real gift from Christ, which nourishes our souls, and that this gift is *His very Self.* More than this we may not comprehend; but the benefit of it the simplest may know by blessed experience. What is it?

The Catechism states it admirably:—"What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby? The *strengthening and refreshing of our souls* by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine."

Mark carefully in that question the word *thereby:* it contains the assertion that the outward and visible sign is the *means* of our partaking this inward and spiritual grace; and this you remember is one of the notes of its being a Sacrament.

Unless we perform the outward act commanded by Christ, we have no right to expect the inward and spiritual grace. The one is the *means* of the other.

The faithful communicant can say with St. Paul, "Christ is my life," in a sense in which the non-communicant cannot say it.

One question and answer remains, with which the Catechism concludes.

We have noticed that the Catechism limits the inward and spiritual grace of the Lord's Supper *to the faithful.* This needs enlargement; therefore the question follows:

"What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?"

"To examine themselves" (so St. Paul, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup," 1 Cor. xi. 28)—"whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death" (we see here the value of the *commemorative* aspect of the institution before insisted on); "and be in charity with all men."

Five things are here required, and we are bidden to examine whether we have them:

1. Repentance; 2. Purpose of amendment; 3. Faith; 4. Thankfulness for Christ's atoning death; 5. Charity.

To these five requirements we shall have to recur hereafter.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls, didst ordain this Holy Communion, grant that we may so faithfully believe Thy promise that it may be to us a means and pledge of our Communion with Thee, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, art now reigning, one God, blessed for ever!

LESSON V.

WE now close our Catechism, and open our Prayer Book.

As we saw at the commencement of the last Lesson, Confirmation is the connecting link between the two Sacraments. It looks backward to Baptism, and forward to the Holy Communion. It is a solemn renewal of our Baptismal vows, and an admission to the Lord's Supper.

There can be no better preparation for Confirmation than meditation on the Baptismal Service of our Prayer Book. And to this we will now turn. We shall find that there is scarcely a single question arising out of that Service that may not be answered out of our invaluable Catechism.

Three forms for the Ministration of Baptism are given in our Prayer Book. But it is with the *first* of these only that we need now concern ourselves. The second is for the case of infants who (by reason of dangerous illness or some other serious cause) cannot be brought to the Church for their baptism. The third form is for the case of those who are baptized when grown to years of discretion.

By far the most usual Service is that for the Public Baptism of Infants: and this we will now proceed to consider.

The opening rubric "admonishes" or cautions us all that Baptism is best administered "on Sundays and other Holy-days when the most number of people come together,"—not only for the child's sake, that many may witness his admission as a new member into Christ's Church, and join in prayer for him; but also for the people's sake, that "every one present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism."

It is ordered that the Service shall be immediately after the Second Lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer.

Each child is to be presented by *three* sponsors.

By the 29th Canon of 1604, parents were forbidden to be sponsors for their own children. But in 1865 Convocation advised the removal of the prohibition, thus returning to the practice of the early Church, which allowed children to be presented by their parents with *one* other Christian friend.

All then assemble round the font, which is to be filled with fresh water each time the Sacrament is administered; and the clergyman asks whether the child have been already baptized or no. It is necessary to be careful to ascertain this, because the Christian Church has always strictly forbidden baptizing over again those who have been once baptized: and it happens sometimes that a child has been baptized *privately* by reason of sickness, and is now brought to the Church for public certifying of the same.

For those who have not been previously baptized the Service then proceeds.

In a brief address we are reminded how Christ told Nicodemus (in John iii.) that none could enter His Kingdom or Church except he be regenerated. that is,

have a new birth given unto him by water ("the outward and visible sign") and by the Holy Ghost ("the inward and spiritual grace"). Then we are asked to join in prayer that the inward as well as the outward part of the Sacrament may be vouchsafed in the present instance,—that while the minister performs the outward and visible sign, God will give the inward and spiritual grace;—that so the child may be made a *lively* (that is, a living) member of Christ's Holy Church.

Then follows the prayer, founded on one of Luther's, the German Reformer. We speak of those two great types of Baptism, one mentioned by St. Peter (1 Pet. iii. 21), the waters of the Flood bearing up that Ark in which the few were saved "by water" from perishing (observe the words "by water" belong to "saved"[1]); and the other mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 2), the waters of the Red Sea, by passing through which the Israelites were delivered from the land of their bondage. And thus we pray that both these types may be fulfilled:—that the child may be admitted into "the *Ark* of Christ's Church;" and "may so pass through the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life."

In a second prayer we beseech God that the infant coming to Holy Baptism may receive "remission of sins." This phrase might be a difficulty to us as applied to a mere infant, had we not seen[2] that the word "*sin*" may mean that state of sinfulness in which we are all born, and on which God's displeasure must rest. How is this state of sinfulnsss to be "remitted" or cancelled? "By spiritual regeneration;" that is, by the child being *born again* into God's family, accepted

[1] This is clear from 1 Pet. iii. 20.

[2] See Lesson III. p. 16.

by his Heavenly Father, from this day forward, as His own child, for Christ's sake.

Thus we see that in the case of an infant the phrase "remission of sins" means *a state of pardon*, or of acceptance, into which the infant is admitted in Baptism.

After these prayers all stand, and the Gospel is read taken from the tenth of St. Mark; recounting how Christ plainly shewed His willingness to receive infants, their tender age being no hindrance, but rather the contrary, making them especially fit to be members of His kingdom.

The blessed encouragement given to Infant Baptism in this passage of Scripture is thus explained.

It leaves no room for doubt that Christ approves this service of the Church: that He, unseen, is even now, as then, receiving these infants in the arms of His mercy, and giving them the blessing of that new life,—that new vital principle, that germ of a spiritual *self*,—which is eternal and divine; and making them partakers (that is, giving them their part or inheritance) in His everlasting kingdom. For that Christ *does* make children in Baptism *inheritors* of His heavenly kingdom we know assuredly; whether they keep or forfeit that inheritance in after years, *that* we cannot know.

For all these mercies we then "faithfully and devoutly give thanks" unto God. Notice in this thanksgiving how carefully the words are chosen:—we do not speak presumptuously of our Baptism; we thank God, not for our knowledge of God or faith in God, but for having *called us* in Baptism to a knowledge of His grace and to faith in Him; praying that He will

increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore; and praying especially for the infants about to be baptized, that God will give them His Holy Spirit that they may be *born again*,—this very day adopted by God as His children,—and so be made this very day heirs of everlasting salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

And with this thanksgiving and prayer ends the first part of the Baptismal Service.

We will not go further in this Lesson, but pause awhile to consider the doctrine of these opening passages of the Service.

The obvious difficulty to one who had never learned his Catechism would be this—"How am I to understand these very confident expressions about the effect of Baptism?"

"Doubt ye not," the Church says, "but earnestly believe that Christ will favourably receive this present infant; that He will embrace him with the arms of His mercy; that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of His everlasting kingdom."

We know, alas! that numbers and numbers of those who have been thus baptized turn out sinful, and even reprobate, in after life:—how then can we speak thus confidently?

The explanation is a very simple one, and to be found in those opening words of the Catechism where it bids us all—yes, every one of us without a single exception—to say, "in Baptism I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

This is a past fact in the life of every baptized Christian which he cannot undo afterwards. *Once*, at all events, he was a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. What he is now, whether still in that state of salvation, is another question, and a most anxious question. But, whether or no he has kept his part of the Covenant, God at any rate fulfilled *His* part, and gave him that good start, accepting him in Baptism as His own child and as a partaker in the inheritance of the Saints. This is the explanation of the strong and confident expressions of the Baptismal Service. We are then on the threshold of the child's life; and seeing him brought to Christ by Christian sponsors, and solemnly received into Christ's Holy Church, and baptized according to Christ's command in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it would be wrong indeed and faithless to doubt for one moment that God was there and then remembering His Covenant, and fulfilling His Divine part of it.

Mark how, by Scripture, by exhortation, by solemn prayer together, the minds of all present (including especially the sponsors) are lifted into this confident hope and glorious assurance.

For this is the sure way to make our prayers and their prayers effectual:—"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24).

This then is the explanation of the confident language in which we speak of the effect of Baptism. We do not for one moment assert that God will at the day of judgment receive this child as His own, or *then* admit him to His kingdom. But we do confidently assert

that God is *now* receiving him as His own, and is *now* admitting him to His kingdom.

It cannot be repeated too often—being the key to the whole Prayer Book—that the word *salvation* has here, as elsewhere, a *present* not a *future* signification.

Grant, O Lord, we pray Thee, that being thus in infancy taken into Thy favour, and for no merits of our own, but for the merits of Thy dear Son, adopted into Thy kingdom, we may so live, that no temptations of the world may lead us to forfeit these Thy blessings, through the same Thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

LESSON VI.

THE second part of the Baptismal Service may be called the *Covenant.*

It opens with an address to the child's *sponsors* or *sureties*, setting forth very plainly the nature of this Covenant. There is much misapprehension about the duties and responsibilities of Godfathers and Godmothers, which a right understanding of the Baptismal Covenant would at once remove.

Let us therefore go carefully through this address.

"Dearly beloved, ye have brought this child here to be baptized; ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe—

(1) To receive him;

(2) To release him of his sins;

(3) To sanctify him with the Holy Ghost;

(4) To give him the Kingdom of Heaven;

(5) And everlasting life."

Here let us pause awhile. A Covenant being between two parties, with promises on both sides, we have here set forth under five heads what our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ engages or promises to do on *His* side in the Baptismal Covenant.

These five heads remind us at once of the latter portion of our Nicene Creed:—

"I believe in the Holy Ghost,"—Christ promises to sanctify the child with the Holy Ghost.

"I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church,"—Christ promises to give the child "the Kingdom of Heaven," *i.e.* a place in that heavenly kingdom which He came to establish on the earth—His Church.

"I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,"—Christ promises "to release the child of his sins." What is meant by the infant's "sins" appears from the opening words of the Service, "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born *in sin*." It is this element of sin that has to be washed away. "That whatsoever filth he hath taken of Adam may be put away by this holy flood"—so the first prayer used to run.[1] The phrase "remission of sins" may thus be used in the case of infants.

"And I look for the life of the world to come,"—so Christ promises to give the child "everlasting life,"—a gift which may indeed be forfeited, but which is none the less verily and indeed given in Baptism; for the Holy Ghost is "the giver of life." To be born of water and *the Spirit* involves necessarily translation into this new atmosphere of life, which the child from that day forward begins to breathe, so to speak. Some teach that this blessing is not given to us until we lay hold of it by *faith;* not so our Prayer Book; our Prayer Book distinctly teaches that it is bestowed upon us *of God's free grace* in Infant Baptism, without any effort on our part,—the child thus profiting by the faith of that "congregation of faithful men" who are then prayerfully admitting him into their number. And this gift

[1] Luther's opening prayer, adopted in Archbishop Hermann's Reformed Liturgy for Cologne.

of a new life we call a *new birth*, or *regeneration*;—it is, in the language of the Catechism, "the inward and spiritual grace of the Sacrament."

Thus then does the Prayer Book sum up what Christ *engages* to do for the child. Mark the undoubting confidence with which the Prayer Book speaks of Christ's performance of this *His part* of the covenant:—"Our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in His Gospel to grant all these things; which promise He, for His part, will most surely keep and perform."

So much for *Christ's* side of the covenant.

Now the address turns to the *child's* side.

"Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ" (so the exhortation proceeds), "*this infant* must also faithfully for his part promise——"

We must pause here to observe attentively and carefully that it is the *infant*, not the *sponsors*, who is now about to make a promise.

This is important. There is a very general misapprehension that it is the sponsors who make the promise; and many shrink, on this account, from being Godfathers and Godmothers, fancying that they will, in some way, become responsible for the child fulfilling these engagements.

This is of course a complete mistake. It is the child, not the sponsors, who is bound. The sponsors do but lend the child their voice, as it were, that he may make answer to the clergyman, and may so have this vow put upon him.

True, they are asked to undertake a responsibility afterwards, at the close of the Service,—the responsibility of seeing to the child's Christian training—but that is a totally different matter, unconnected with

these baptismal vows, which rest on the *child* entirely and exclusively.

Doubtless people fall into error on this point, because they misconstrue the words that follow, "By you that are their sureties."

"The infants promise by you," simply means that the infants make the promise by your voice, being themselves unable to speak. And the sponsors are called *sureties*, because they give surety or *security* to the Church, as witnesses that the infants have had this solemn vow and obligation put upon them.

It is true the word "surety" sometimes means "one who is bound for another," "one who becomes bail for another." But that the Godfathers and Godmothers are not "sureties" in this sense, is plain from the fact that they are equally required in Adult Baptism, where the persons baptized answer with their own voice, and are clearly and obviously bound in their own persons.

One more phrase might, if left unexplained, seem to favour the error :—"Until he come of age to take it upon himself." But presently, when we come to study the Confirmation Service, we shall see that these words do not mean that the promise there for the first time begins to rest on the child ; but that the child does then by his own confession admit that this promise has been ever since Baptism resting on him.

But it may be objected, "Is it not a fiction that an unconscious infant can thus promise by the mouth of other people?"

We answer, it is no fiction, but a stern reality that a solemn obligation is there and then imposed upon the infant. True, it is imposed by others ; but those others

have a perfect right,—nay, it is their bounden duty,—to impose it, knowing as they do that it is for the infant's infinite good.

Moreover they are only doing in spiritual matters what is done continually in temporal matters. Young children often inherit estates involving certain responsibilities—change of name or other stipulations. Their trustees never hesitate to impose these obligations upon them ; and the children are bound in law to fulfil these obligations, else they forfeit the estate. So it is with that inheritance that is bestowed upon children at their Baptism. They are then made inheritors of Christ's kingdom. But certain obligations are attached to it, and those obligations must be understood to rest upon the child from the very day that he enters the kingdom ; however unconscious of it he may be at the time.

Consistently with this view—that the party who becomes bound by the promise is the child, not the sponsors—we may notice that the four *Demands* which follow are addressed in fact to the child.

This was still more plain in the old Offices, in which the minister at this point of the service inquired the name of the child, and then addressed the child by name—"John," or "James," "dost thou renounce the Devil . . . . ?" and the sponsors made answer for the child, "I do ;" and so on, repeating the name before each demand. In 1661 the explanatory words, "in the name of this child," were introduced in the first demand, which perhaps is to be regretted, for it seems to address the demand to the sponsors, and is inconsistent with the wording of the other demands, which are still most properly addressed to the babe,—

"Dost thou believe . . . ?" "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" "Wilt thou, then, obediently keep God's holy will . . . . ?"

We need not now dwell, at any length, on the meaning of the demands that follow, as they are explained in our Lessons on the Catechism.

In the Catechism they appear as *three;* and it will be seen at once that here in the Baptism service they are in fact *three*, not *four*,—the middle demand being merely resolved into two: "Dost thou believe . . . ?" and "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?"

In reading the first demand we must remember, what has been elsewhere explained, that the word "renounce," means to "disown," or "disclaim," or "refuse allegiance to,"—rather than forsake. This explains its application to an *infant*, who has committed no actual sin, and therefore has nothing to forsake.

The true meaning of *renunciation*, as applied to an infant, is well brought out in the following passage from a well-known old writer,[1] with which we may fitly conclude this second, or Covenant, portion of the Baptismal Service:—

"When we enter into covenant with God, we must have the same friends and enemies as God hath; especially when the same that are enemies to Him are also enemies to our salvation. And therefore, since children are by nature the slaves of the Devil, and, though they have not yet been actually in his service, will nevertheless be apt to be drawn into it by the pomps and glory of the world, and the carnal desires

[1] Wheatly, whose volume *On the Book of Common Prayer* was published a century and a half ago.

of the flesh ; it is necessary to *secure* them to God betimes, and to *engage* them to take all these for their enemies, since whoso loveth them cannot love God (1 John ii. 15)."

And of the third and last requirement the same writer says : " Since the child now takes Christ for his Lord and Master, and lists himself under His banner, it is fit he should vow in the words of this Sacrament[1] to observe the commands of his General. Wherefore as he promised to forsake all *evil* before, so now he must engage to do all that is good, without which he cannot be admitted into this Christian Church."

[1] Wheatly clearly had in mind the old Roman meaning of the word "Sacramentum"—a soldier's oath of obedience to his commander.

LESSON VII.

WE have now reached the third and most important portion of the Baptismal Service, that which includes the sacramental act itself. It is prefaced by four brief prayers for the child, and a longer prayer for the sanctification of the water. In old times, the water in the font was changed once a month only; and then these four petitions, with one or two others, including an invocation of the Holy Spirit, were used as a consecration service for the fresh water (the *Benedictio fontis*). But the Reformers of 1552 omitted all mention of consecration of the water, lest the people should imagine some magical virtue was imparted to it; and it was not till 1661 that a prayer for the sanctification of the water was once more authorized, and an order inserted that the font should be freshly filled with water whenever the Sacrament of Baptism was administered.

Some of the phrases in these preliminary petitions may need explanation.

"Grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in him."

This notion of Baptism, being a burial of an old self and the resurrection of a new and better self, was far more vividly set forth in the early days of the Church,

when the convert was submerged in some stream, and rising again from its waters, was clad in the white robe of his new faith.[1] It is still intended that infants should be dipped into and under the water of the font, but this mode of baptism can seldom be practised in our climate without risk. However, the ideas of its being a burial and resurrection, though less evidently symbolized, are familiar to us from Scripture.

Speaking of Baptism, St. Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life, . . . knowing this, that our old man (or 'old Adam') is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 4-6).

So again: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God" (Col. ii. 12). "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (iii. 9, 10).

What is meant by St. Paul's phrase, "the old Adam," and "the new man," adopted in this passage, is most clearly set forth in the no less Scriptural language of the next petition:—

"Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him." Compare with this Gal. v. 24: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts; if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

[1] Called the *Chrysom*, which the minister was to put upon the newly-baptized, saying, "Take this white vesture for a token of the innocency which, by God's grace in this holy Sacrament of Baptism, is given unto thee." Then, too, the child was anointed with oil.

"Endued" (or clothed) "with heavenly virtues," a phrase suggested by the white robe in which the newly-baptized used to be arrayed.

The beauty and musical cadence of these short prayers cannot fail to strike the reader.

In the consecration prayer which follows (corresponding in its position to the consecration prayer of the Service for the other Sacrament), we plead, as in that other consecration prayer also, a fact connected with our Lord's Passion. In the effusion of "blood and water" from our Lord's side on the cross, of which St. John makes such emphatic mention in his Gospel, and to which he seems to allude also in his Epistle, the Church has ever recognised a symbol of the two Sacraments. As that blood and water flowed forth from our Lord's crucified body, so may the strengthening efficacy of the two Sacraments be said to flow forth from His glorified body.

"Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin;" we now see why we appealed to the fact that *water*, as well as blood, flowed from the side of Jesus. If God was pleased *then*, in so marked a way, to connect *water* with the death of our Lord, so now we pray that He will renew the connexion, and make this water a holy *pledge* to us that the child (who is dipped therein) benefits by that death of Christ, and receives remission of his sins.

The word "*mystical*" has the same meaning as the word "*sacramental*,"—the water being the outward and visible sign, and the washing away of sin the inward and spiritual grace.

The word "*sanctify*" means to "*consecrate*." When we speak of consecrating water, or bread and wine,

we mean that we set them apart from all other uses, and appropriate them to this holy use.[1]

The "washing away of sin," in the case of a child, means the washing away of the stain of sinfulness which he inherited as one of a fallen race.

We are reminded here of several passages of Scripture:—

"According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5). "That He might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. v. 26). "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16).

Lastly, we must notice the conclusion of the prayer, that the child "may ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children."

That the child is now made one of God's faithful and elect children, we believe and take for granted: that he may in his after-life *remain* in the number—continue such—this we humbly hope and pray. But clearly Baptism cannot *ensure* that continuance, however much it may conduce to it.

After this solemn appeal to God to bless the Church's Sacrament, the clergyman is instructed in the rubric to take the child into his hands, and ask the sponsors to name it.

"And then naming it after them" (*i.e.* as they shall dictate), "if they shall certify (or assure) him that the child may well endure it" (will take no harm from being dipped), "he shall dip it in the water discreetly

[1] "By this is meant, not that the water contracts any quality in its nature or essence by such consecration, but only that it is sanctified or made holy in its use, and separated from common to sacred purposes." —WHEATLY *On the Common Prayer.*

and warily;" . . . "but if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it."

Thus Baptism by *immersion* is still the *rule* of our Church, and Baptism by *affusion* (pouring water over the child's head) is intended to be the exception. But practically *affusion* has come to be usually adopted, and *immersion* seldom desired. This is perhaps to be regretted. In old days, all children, unless sick, were *dipped* in the water of the font.

Our Prayer Book neither prescribes nor forbids the old custom of "trine immersion," that is, dipping the child (or pouring water over the child, as the case may be) *three times*, as the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are severally named. The Greek and Roman Churches still do it thrice. But as the order to do it thrice, expressed in the Prayer Book of 1549, was advisedly struck out in the Prayer Book of 1552, and has never been re-inserted, it seems that the English Church means it to be discontinued.

After the sacramental act of Baptism there follows the "reception" and "the signing with the sign of the cross." This solemn act, concluding this portion of the service, is peculiar to our Church. We do not mean that admission into Christ's Church is a separate act following Baptism. The admission into Christ's Church is the inward and spiritual grace (called "regeneration") accompanying the outward and visible act of Baptism; and the two must not be separated. In the words, "We receive this child," etc., the minister is but giving expression to the congregation's welcome: "We, the congregation, receive or welcome this child, who a moment ago was admitted into our fellowship." Then with his hand

the minister makes the figure of the cross on the child's forehead, according to a custom as old as St. Augustine's time, or older.

"Signing with a sign" is a phrase corresponding with the scriptural expression, "sealing with a seal," three times applied by St. Paul to Baptism:—

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 22). "In Whom also after that ye believed" (after your conversion), "ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30).

While the clergyman, by this outward gesture, gives expression to the Church's joyful confidence that the child has been thus "sealed by the Holy Spirit," he uses these noble and eloquent words, reminding all present of the vow which the child previously had put upon him:—

We "do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the Devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

Every one of these inspiriting words is drawn from Scripture:—

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed" (Luke ix. 26). "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). "We preach Christ crucified;" "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 2). "Thou

hast given a banner to them that fear Thee" (Psa. lx. 4). "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12). "Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13). "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits" (see margin) "in high places" (Eph. vi. 11, 12). "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3).

Grant, O Lord Jesus, that as I have been signed with the sign of Thy cross, so I may not be ashamed to confess Thee before men; and manfully fighting under Thy banner, may continue Thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

LESSON VIII.

THE concluding portion of the Baptismal Service, like the concluding portion of the Holy Communion Service, is one of thanksgiving, commencing here, as there, with the Lord's Prayer.

The few words in which we are invited to prayer and thanksgiving are weighty and instructive:—

"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate. . . ."

Mark here how confidently we assume, that, as we have faithfully done our part, God has most surely done His part of the Sacrament. Our part was the outward and visible sign; God's part was the inward and spiritual grace. And what is the inward and spiritual grace? In one word, it is "regeneration."

"Regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5), "New Birth" (John i. 13, iii. 3, 6); "Adoption into the number of God's children" (Gal. iv. 5; Eph. i. 5); "Translation into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13):—these are all Scripture phrases, and may be used indifferently to express that change which takes place in a child's relation to God in Holy Baptism. The alternative phrase in our Prayer Book, "grafted into the Body of Christ's Church," sets forth the same idea under another metaphor. When we remember that the Church is the

mystical Body of Christ, the idea of being engrafted into it so as to draw strength and nourishment from it, as a bud draws sap from the new stock into which it is inserted, will be seen to carry with it a very deep meaning.

This then, and no less than this, is the grace of Baptism.

We believe very confidently, because we have God's word for it, that while we are faithfully performing the outward ordinance as Christ commanded, God translates the child out of disgrace into grace; so that, whereas Adam's sin rested on the child, before he was brought to the font, now that he is baptized Adam's sin is "remitted;" God imputes hereditary sinfulness to him no longer,—regards him henceforth as a forgiven child, once disinherited, now again an inheritor. This is to the child a new start in life. And inasmuch as it is due to no effort of his own,—but as purely God's gift to him as was his first birth,—it is called a second *birth*, or new birth, or regeneration:—the word "birth" being applied to it by our Lord, in his conversation with Nicodemus, for two reasons probably, if we may reverently say so:—first, to shew him how entirely it was God's gift, not due to any merit or effort of his own; and secondly, to shew that it was but a *beginning*, the beginning of a new life, in which he must see to it that he persevere.

This last is precisely the thought which the words of our Church here suggest, inviting us, while we thank God for these benefits, with one accord to make our prayers unto Him, "that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning."

So in the Catechism: "I heartily thank our Heavenly

Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation, . . . and I pray unto God to give me His grace that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

In that wonderful prayer of our Lord that now follows, we may notice how every petition seems to receive a special meaning as used in this connexion with Baptism.

"Our Father"—this child having now received "the spirit of adoption" may cry "Abba, Father,"—"Hallowed be Thy Name,"—that Threefold Name into Which we have just baptized our little one.

"Thy kingdom come,"—for of such as these little ones is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,"—where their angels do always behold the face of their Father Which is in Heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,"—food is the first need of one who is born: spiritual food is the first need of one who is born again of God.

"Forgive us our trespasses,"—we believe that this Baptism has been "for the remission of sins."

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,"—we especially include the child in this prayer, that he may fight manfully under Christ's banner, and continue His faithful servant to his life's end.

If the Lord's Prayer had been written expressly for this occasion it could hardly be more appropriate.

In the thanksgiving that follows, the same confident belief is expressed that this child has in very truth received the inward and spiritual grace of the Sacrament:—that God hath been pleased "to regenerate him with His Holy Spirit;" "to receive him for His

own child by adoption;" "to incorporate him into His Holy Church."

Then the idea of Baptism being a kind of burial of the old natural self, and a resurrection of the new and Christian self, which we had before, is repeated.

The phrase "utterly abolish the whole body of sin," is of course taken directly from Rom. vi. 6 :—

"Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin."

The "body of sin" is therefore the whole mass of our animal desires and passions, which have need to be mortified and crushed within us, so that the spiritual part of our nature may be freed from their control and tyranny.

This process of mortifying and killing within us our fleshly desires and passions must be a painful one. Baptism commits or pledges us to this painful process —makes us therefore partakers not only in the benefits, but also, to some extent, in the pain of our Lord's death; but as in His case, so in ours, this pain is to lead to a resurrection. Once subdued and killed, these carnal desires will give us no more pain; so that even in this life we begin to be partakers in our Lord's resurrection life.

This is St. Paul's idea when he writes, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Col. iii. 1).

"So that, finally, with the residue" (with the rest) "of Thy Holy Church" (those who remain when all that offend have been weeded out, Matt. xiii. 41), "he may be an inheritor of Thine everlasting kindgom." Of God's kingdom he is an inheritor already, that is, of

the Church militant; of the everlasting kingdom, that is, of the Church glorified, we pray that he may be eventually an inheritor; but of this Baptism is no guarantee—it must depend on whether he "lead the rest of his life according to this beginning."

The Prayers and Thanksgivings being now concluded, it only remains for the clergyman to charge the Godfathers and Godmothers not to neglect the duty for which they have made themselves responsible. This duty is, in brief, to secure to the child a Christian education. This exhortation does not for one moment mean that the sponsors are to take the education of the child out of the hands of the parents, or in any way relieve them of a responsibility which rests necessarily upon them as parents. The Prayer Book does not say, "It is your parts and duties to teach this infant;" but, "It is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught"—taught, that is, by his parents, or those to whom his parents may entrust the task. When they have ascertained that it is being done, or, if neglected, have done all they can to urge it, their duty is discharged; unless, indeed, the parents die without providing for the child's education: in that case the sponsors ought themselves to make provision for it.

A better definition of Christian education could hardly be found than that which is here given. The child is to learn all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, and is to be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. Education in these words is made to consist of two parts, *instruction* and *training*.

The instruction again is twofold; it is to embrace all that the child ought to *know*, and all that the child ought to *believe*, to his soul's health; knowledge and faith—both are spoken of as needful to the soul's health. What a noble phrase too that is, "the soul's health!" For the healing or health of the soul there is needed knowledge of God's laws, both written and unwritten, laws of the Bible and laws of conscience; laws of nature too, and laws of grace—the two are never at variance. And besides this knowledge, faith in the Lawgiver, belief in Him Who is unseen.

All this is included in the word *instruction*. But "instruction" is not enough. We may know God's laws, and believe that He requires our obedience, and yet have no habit of obedience. Therefore that other part of education is equally necessary which we call *training*—the formation of good habits in the child, the moral part of the educator's task. Heart as well as head needs his care, perhaps the heart even more than the head. To know right and wrong is of no avail, unless the child be led also to love the one and hate the other. Hence the discipline and government of children are yet more important than the lessons taught them.

All this seems to have been understood by those who in 1549 framed this exhortation. It could not be better put:—

"Let him learn all that he ought to know and believe to his soul's health:" there is the instruction.

"Let him be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life:" there is the training.

Then most eloquently the Prayer Book shews how Baptism sets forth and symbolizes the end and aim of

all education, which is to make us like unto Christ—a twofold process—" that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized" (lowered into the water and raised out of it again), " die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying" (deadening) "all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding" (making progress) " in all virtue and godliness of living." These words should be written in letters of gold in every schoolroom.

Then the clergyman adds, while they are still standing round the font, a charge that so soon as the children can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments in English, and really understand the Church Catechism, they are to be brought to the Bishop by their sponsors for Confirmation.

Administered, as Baptism usually is, in the course of Evening, not the Morning, Service, the choir seems to strike a congenial chord in the hymn of the holy Symeon, which commences as all disperse from the font to their accustomed places in the church—a thanksgiving poured forth by the aged Saint as he held the Holy Child in his arms, that his eyes had seen this "Salvation, prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel." " Illumination" was one of the favourite words for Baptism in the early Church.

O blessed Lord, enlighten our minds and hearts, we beseech Thee, that as we have been illuminated in holy Baptism, so as we grow up our minds may know Thy law, and our hearts may love to keep it, for His sake Who died and rose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

LESSON IX.

THE concluding words of the Baptism Service pointed onwards to the Confirmation Service, on which we now enter.

It is called *Confirmation*, because it is a *confirming* or *strengthening* of one who has been baptized. Both the rite and its name are scriptural. By comparing carefully together the following passages of the New Testament, Acts xiv. 22, xv. 41, viii. 5-20, and Heb. vi. 1, 2, we may plainly prove that it was the Apostles' habit to give a very solemn benediction, accompanied by prayer and the laying on of hands, to those who had been baptized; and that this was from the first called "Confirmation."

Let us examine these passages. We read in the Acts (xiv. 22) that Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities where they had preached the Gospel, "confirming the souls of the disciples" (those whom they had on their first visit baptized). And again, that Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia, "confirming the churches" (xv. 41). If we wish to know *how* they confirmed the newly baptized, we may learn it from what is told us in the eighth chapter. We there read how the Evangelist St. Philip converted and baptized many of the Samaritans; and how the Apostles, when

they heard it, sent two of their own number, Peter and John, to Samaria, "who when they were come down *prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost;* for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*"

This so closely resembles the rite of Confirmation as practised by the Church all through these eighteen centuries, that we may very confidently assume that the rite of Confirmation as handed down to us by the Church is a continuation of the Apostolic practice here described in the case of the Samaritan converts.

Three things we learn, then, about it from this passage:—

1. It would seem that the Evangelist St. Philip could baptize, but he could not *confirm.* Confirmation needed the presence of an Apostle.

2. There was an outward and visible sign, namely, a laying on of hands—the most solemn form of benediction.

3. This laying on of hands was accompanied by a gift of the Holy Ghost.

But here a difficulty may be suggested.

In this passage Confirmation would appear at first sight to be a more important means of grace than Baptism; for while others could baptize, Apostles only could confirm; and in the most marked way it seems to be implied that the Holy Ghost was given in Confirmation, and *not* in Baptism:—"for as yet He" (the Holy Ghost) "was fallen on none of them, they were only baptized."

Let us speak of this last point first.

Does the passage really mean that the Holy Ghost had not been given them in Baptism? or may it not mean that what Baptism had *not* bestowed was an outward and visible manifestation of the Holy Ghost, namely, the gift of tongues and the like,—Pentecostal gifts, as they are called? The expression "had not fallen upon them" seems to favour this latter view, and still more the next verse, which speaks of Simon "*seeing*" that through the imposition of hands the gift was bestowed, and wishing to purchase the power. But happily another Scripture proves unmistakeably that this is the meaning.

At the opening of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul, writing to Christians who had never been visited by an Apostle, expresses a strong desire to visit them that he "may impart to them some *spiritual gift*," to the end that they may be established or *confirmed* (i. 11). These Roman converts therefore, like the Samaritans, had had no *gifts* of the Spirit conferred upon them by Baptism; but that they had received the *grace* of the Holy Spirit happily St. Paul makes perfectly clear to us; for in this same Epistle (viii. 9, 11) he speaks of their being "not in the flesh but in the Spirit," and of "the Spirit of God dwelling in them."

It is clear, then, that the Sacrament of Baptism conferred the Holy Spirit; and that all that the imposition of the Apostles' hands added was the manifestation of His presence by Pentecostal gifts.

As to the other point—that whereas others might baptize, Apostles only could confirm—this by no means proves the greater importance of Confirmation, but rather the reverse,—Baptism being deemed of such paramount importance that it could not safely be de-

layed until the arrival of an Apostle, whereas, in the case of Confirmation, delay and caution in imparting its much coveted gifts were clearly desirable.

It seems clear that the power of imparting these extraordinary gifts ceased with the Apostles. Those who had been confirmed by the Apostles had them; the third generation appear to have been without them. But *the imposition of hands* was continued by the Apostles' successors, the Bishops; for although it no longer conferred miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and although the *grace* of the Spirit had been already given in Baptism, yet the early Christians believed, and we still believe, that an accession of grace is thereby conferred, and the child of God is *confirmed* and *strengthened* for his spiritual warfare.

One more passage may be noticed where the Apostolic rite of Confirmation is clearly alluded to. It is at the opening of Hebrews vi. The first rudiments of Christianity are there enumerated. They are six, and they are mentioned in pairs. The first pair is what the Christian does for himself; the second what the Church does for him; the third points to what God will do for him at the last. Now, what is that middle pair, and what are the two most necessary things which the Church bestows on all at the outset of their Christian course? *Baptism and the laying on of hands.* Thus early had Confirmation come to be reckoned among the Church's chiefest means of grace.

Any one carefully considering these several passages will see that we may justly claim for Confirmation an Apostolic origin, though the cessation of miraculous gifts has somewhat modified its character. As it was

not (so far as we know) "ordained by Christ Himself," we do not call it a Sacrament.

According to Holy Scripture's teaching, then, the really important part of Confirmation, and the explanation of its name, is this, that young persons are therein *confirmed* or strengthened by the Church's most solemn benediction, through the hands of her chief officer, prayer being made for them that they may receive the Holy Ghost.

As a preliminary to this, the candidates for Confirmation are required to acknowledge openly and publicly their baptismal obligations. They do not now for the first time take these vows upon themselves; but "with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, they ratify and confirm the same."

The use of the word "confirm" here (in the active voice) has led some to imagine that this is the reason why the service is called "Confirmation," and that this is the essential part of it.

This, it need hardly be said, is a mistake; it is not because the young people "confirm" their vows, but because they "*are confirmed*" by the Bishop, that it is called a Confirmation. But as the ratifying of these holy vows is the part of the service for which *they* are responsible, it behoves them to prepare for it by a very careful reconsideration of those vows, and of the baptismal covenant of which they form a part.

For this reason the Catechism is in our Prayer Book inserted immediately before the Confirmation Service, and in close connexion with it. Indeed, in the early editions of the Prayer Book (before the revision of 1661) it was incorporated with the Confirmation Service. And the title of the Service then was: "The order of Con-

firmation, or laying on of hands upon children baptized, and able to render an account of their faith, according to the Catechism following;" and the Catechism that followed was called (as it is still called) "An instruction to be learned of every child, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop."

When the Catechism (in 1661) was printed separately, what had been an explanatory rubric preceding the Catechism was made into a preface to be read aloud before the Bishop required of the candidates to declare their assent to their baptismal vows.

There is not much that needs explanation in this preface.

It begins by repeating what was said at the conclusion of the Baptism Office, adding that this catechetical instruction of candidates previous to their confirmation is highly "convenient" or befitting, in order that, being now come to years of discretion, they may exercise that discretion in the matter of their religion; and make an intelligent choice and decision whether they will renew their baptismal vows or no.

Discretion means the faculty of discerning or discriminating. Moses asked for this discriminating or discerning choice when he said (Deut. xxx. 19):—

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life."

And Joshua called for the same decision when he said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve.... And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods" (Josh. xxiv. 15, 16).

Our Lord put the same choice before His Apostles

when many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him :—"Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Such a "day of the Lord," such a "valley of decision," to multitudes is their Confirmation.

If with no intelligent understanding of what they say, if with little or no reflection upon it, merely because others are doing it, and their elders expect it of them, they repeat the words which the Prayer Book puts into their mouth in reply to the Bishop's question, they are not only losing a blessing, but they are sinning against their own souls; they are dealing insincerely with their own conscience in a very solemn matter. No one ever did this without being the worse for it afterward.

But if after careful consideration, weighing well every word of the promise they are about to repeat, understanding clearly what they are renouncing, and to what they are pledging themselves, they resolve to make a good confession, and declare themselves on the Lord's side, then God's blessing will surely rest upon them, and Confirmation will be a real strengthening of all that is best within them.

O Thou Who dost put into our minds good desires and holy resolutions, confirm and strengthen in me this my present purpose, and enable me to fight manfully against the world's temptations, through Jesus Christ my Lord.

LESSON X.

WE will devote this Lesson to the promises which we renew at our Confirmation. They are our side of the Baptismal Covenant. And surely if anything were wanting to quicken our resolve to keep our part of that Covenant, it would be the thought of the privileges which God has bestowed upon us on His side,—making us members of Christ; children of God; inheritors of His kingdom. Let us weigh well the blessedness of each one of these expressions.

"Members of Christ." We think those children were happy whom Christ drew to Him in His humiliation, and took up in His arms, putting His hands upon them and blessing them. But those whom the glorified Christ draws to Him have more than this:—Christ makes them members incorporate of Himself, of His Body, which is the Church; so that something of His Divine life enters into their spirits, and gives them a strength greater than their own. Even quite young Christians shew a strength of principle sometimes that astonishes and awes the children of this world. The bud grafted into the Vine draws its life-juice from the Vine. The child who is made a member of Christ in Baptism, and resists not his baptismal

grace, draws daily on that Holy Spirit Who is the "Giver of life."

And if members of Christ, then "children of God." For if we are made one with Him Who is the Son of God, then we too are the sons of God. Only in a lower sense: He by eternal generation, we by regeneration only—that is, by adoption. And the blessedness in store for those who forfeit not this adoption is past our understanding:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John iii. 2).

For "if children, then heirs," St. Paul says, meaning by "*heirs*" those who have the hope and promise of a higher life with Christ hereafter. But the Catechism uses not this word "*heirs*," but that other word "*inheritors*." And there is a difference in meaning. You are the *heir* of something future. You are the *inheritor* of something that you now possess. Thus at least were the meanings of the two words distinguished in the seventeenth century.

In 1661, the Puritans proposed to change the word "inheritor" in this passage of the Catechism into "heir," alleging as their reason for the change that "inheritor" indicated one who had already entered upon his inheritance, and "heir" one who was still expecting it. The Bishops replied, that for this very reason "inheritor" ought to be retained; for it is not *Heaven* of which we are speaking, but *the Kingdom of Heaven*, in our Lord's constant sense of the term—His Church on earth namely; and into this inheritance we have entered at our Baptism.

Think then of the blessedness of this. To have hope

of an inheritance is something, but it is far better to have it already bestowed upon us. And that without any effort or merit of our own. We were aliens and disinherited when Christ redeemed us and restored us to our inheritance.

All this God did for us as His part of the covenant, taking it on trust, as it were, that we should do our part. And shall we not do it? Can we for shame fail to do our best at any rate to fulfil our part and redeem the pledge given for us at our Baptism?

At your Confirmation you were asked to make this good resolve.

What then is our side of the covenant? It is threefold. Allegiance, faith, obedience; these three words sum up what you have promised. These are the three duties to which you were *engaged* at your Baptism, and which you must with your own mouth acknowledge at your Confirmation.

Let us consider each. And first, *allegiance.* You must own no other master. The devil must not be your master; the world must not be your master; the flesh must not be your master.

This is precisely the meaning of the word "renounce." It is often explained to mean "forsake" or "give up." And this inaccurate explanation leads to perplexing questions:—"Am I bound, or how far am I bound, to give up the world, give up going into society, for instance?" And again, "Am I bound, or how far am I bound, to give up and mortify the appetites of the flesh? When do they become sinful? Where is the line to be drawn?"

These perplexing questions are all solved at once by a more correct understanding of the word *renounce.*

To renounce the world, the flesh, and the Devil, means (as we have said above) to refuse to let them be our masters. We are Christ's liegemen, we must renounce all other allegiance. Thus the line of duty becomes at once clear.

So long as the world is not your master, you may mingle with the world. The moment you feel that worldly things—society, public opinion, fashion, praise of men, ambition, or the like—are mastering you, gaining an influence over you which you cannot resist, then it is your plain duty to withdraw, and live a stricter life as to these things, until your better self, that is, Christ, has regained the mastery. So with the flesh.

What you are pledged to, then, is this.

As Christ's soldier and servant you must fight manfully against the Devil and all his works—the pride, the malice, the falsehood, whereby he is ever tempting you to work his will.

As Christ's soldier and servant you must fight manfully against the world, lest its wealth, honours, cares, praise and pleasures—its "pomp and vanity," as the Catechism calls these things—should master you.

As Christ's soldier and servant you must fight manfully against the flesh, remembering that your bodily appetites, good and wholesome while you master them, are utterly sinful when they master you.

If ever you have a doubt how far you may go in any indulgence of any kind or sort whatever, most especially indulgence connected with your body, ask yourself this simple question, Should I be ashamed that my mother should see this? Or, still better, Should I be ashamed that the holy eye of Christ should rest upon me while thus occupied?

St. Paul's rule comes to the same thing, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

God only must you serve; all other service you must renounce. This is your "oath of supremacy," your vow of allegiance. See how reasonable it is: you may not always be *able* to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; nor does God ask of you any such rash vow. But you can and must refuse to call them master; you can and must resist them. This is your vow and promise. The bravest soldier falls sometimes—but he falls only to rise again and renew the fight; *yield* to the foe he will not, so help him God!

Admirably well the Baptismal Service unfolds this true meaning of the word "renounce:"—"Wilt thou renounce" these things, "*so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?*"

So much for the first obligation, now for the second.

It is that you will "believe all the articles of the Christian faith."

An easy promise, it may seem, at first sight. You have been able to say the Creed from childhood, and have never questioned any one of its statements.

But be not too sure. There are two kinds of belief mentioned in Scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). This is one kind of belief, so precious and so excellent that it is sufficient alone to save a man's soul. But we read of another kind of belief:—"Simon himself believed also." . . . . "But Peter said unto him, Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts viii. 13, 21).

Nay, "The devils also believe and tremble" (James ii. 19).

This latter kind is clearly worthless. Of which kind, then, is your belief? You must see how important is this question.

If it be belief of that second kind, mere consent or acquiescence in certain statements of past facts,—if you only believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was born, died, rose again, and ascended to Heaven, as you believe any other facts of history that seem to you sufficiently attested, then your belief, if it go no further, will be of very little use to you. It is altogether self-evident that this cold hard belief of the understanding cannot be that which ensures a man's salvation, and which is required of us in the Bible and in the Confirmation Service. If you have any suspicion that your habitual belief in the articles of faith may possibly be only of this kind, then begin at once to examine and see whether it really go deeper or not.

Take each of these three heads of your belief and ask yourself such questions as the following :—

"I believe in God the Father." Let me test this. If I believe in the holy all-seeing God habitually, then I must believe that I am *always* in His sight. Is this so? If it be so, then I should be equally afraid of doing wrong when alone, as when in company. Is it so? Which do I fear most, what men will say, or what God speaking through my conscience will say? If you find that those faults which are unknown to any but yourself trouble you far less than those which bring you into disgrace with the world, then you have reason to fear that you have no very strong or habitual belief in God.

Again, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord." If I was told that there was some mistake, and that it was not the Son of God Who was born and died eighteen hundred years ago, how would it affect me? Would it make me utterly miserable? or should I go on living much as before, neither happier nor unhappier? And yet if my faith in my Saviour be a reality, then to lose Him would mean that I myself was lost, lost to all eternity! And if I really thought *that*, my life surely would be simply miserable. How is it then?

So lastly, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Is this to me a reality, or a mere phrase? If it is to me a reality, that my body is in truth the Temple of One Who is none other than the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity,—that He, God the Holy Ghost, is dwelling within me—surely it is an awful thought, enough to solemnize my whole life. Is it so?

In this way it behoves us all to examine our belief in these Christian doctrines, before we venture to say "All this I stedfastly believe."

We conclude with the third obligation. We have bound ourselves to keep God's holy will and commandments.

If God's commandments were those *ten rules* only that we commit to memory, we might perhaps promise to keep them. But would that satisfy our Lord? He said He came to *fulfil* them, meaning that He came to turn rules into *principles*. He asks more than Moses asked. He requires of us to make the principle of the rule our own, so that we may need the written rule no longer,—so that we may be not under the law but under grace. But how hard it is thoroughly to adopt and make our own these holy

principles! Take even one of them, the principle of the seventh commandment, which (as Christ teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount) is purity of thought and word as well as of action; how hard it is to be perfectly pure!

What then is it that God requires of us? This at all events,—not to allow ourselves, or indulge ourselves knowingly, in any sinful habit. We may not be able to overcome it altogether perhaps;—that therefore we do not promise. But we may and can pledge ourselves to struggle against it.

The more we strive to keep in this sense God's commandments the more we shall learn to love them, and find out that in keeping of them there is great reward! But who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults! Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer!

LESSON XI.

WE have now considered what Confirmation is—tracing its institution to the Apostles,—and what it pledges us to,—unfolding the three promises of our Baptism which in Confirmation we are required to renew.

We may now proceed with the Service.

Mark first how solemnly the Bishop charges us to renew these vows.

"Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew"—that is the word: we do not now make it for the first time, but we renew—"the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?"

Thus solemnly the Bishop demands of you whether you acknowledge yourself bound by the vows which your sponsors made you responsible for in your infancy. And now by your own act and deed, by your own free voice,—"compassed about with a cloud of witnesses," God and His holy angels and His church on earth all listening—you answer, "I do." There is joy in

Heaven if you say this from your heart, as a good and faithful soldier of Christ.

Is this a rash vow on your part? Yes, if you make it trusting in your own strength. But it is not a rash vow if your trust is in God's strength. How wholesome and comforting then are the words that follow, taken from Psalm cxxiv. The Bishop leads you to them, "Our help is in the Name of the Lord," and you take up the quotation, "Who hath made heaven and earth." And the Bishop, again in the words of the Psalmist (Psa. cxiii. 2), "Blessed be the Name of the Lord," and again you complete the quotation, "Henceforth, world without end," or, as we have it in our Psalter, "From this time forth for evermore." And once more the Bishop, from Psalm cii. 1: "Lord, hear our prayers;" and for the third time you take up the Psalm, "And let our cry come unto Thee."

Very beautiful are these echoes of Zion's songs, expressing so exactly the thoughts and desires of our hearts at this solemn moment.

Then, mindful that Confirmation of old was ever accompanied by prayer for the special gifts of the Holy Ghost, and believing fully that though those miraculous gifts are no longer bestowed, being no longer needed, yet those other far more precious gifts, His gifts of grace, may still and do still accompany the laying on of hands, the Bishop offers up his prayer to God that He will even now bestow "the sevenfold gifts" of the Holy Ghost on these His servants kneeling before Him. He would not dare to ask this of God, had not God already regenerated them in Baptism, and so given them pardon of their sins. His thought is that of St. Paul, that "*much more*, being reconciled by

Christ's death, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v 10). So he pleads the past regeneration in Baptism as a ground for expecting the gifts of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost Who regenerated them in infancy will "much more" now strengthen them in their riper years.

Then follows the recital of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, taken directly from the Greek and Latin translations of Isaiah xi. 2. In our translation, as in the Hebrew, the "fear of the Lord" is mentioned twice over in the sixth and seventh place; but, in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate it is rendered by "piety" in the sixth place;—whence our Prayer Book has "true godliness" as the sixth gift, and "the fear of the Lord" as the seventh.

The seven gifts may then be explained as follows:—In Isaiah these gifts are the Unction of the Messiah, the Anointed One,—the dew and rain which fall from heaven upon the Branch, or Rod or Sprout from "the stem of Jesse." But as the passage is here quoted in this most ancient prayer (as old as the fourth or fifth century), they are "the unction from the Holy One" which the Apostle St. John ascribes to all who are in Christ (1 John ii. 20). Six of them are mentioned in pairs. The seventh stands by itself.

I. and II. "The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding." "Wisdom" enables us to choose a worthy *end*; "understanding" directs us to the right *means* towards that end.

The Christian's first business is to determine what shall be the great end or purpose of his life. This requires wisdom. His next business is to see clearly how to attain that end or purpose. This needs understanding.

III. and IV. "The Spirit of Counsel and Ghostly Strength."

Counsel is the word used so continually in Holy Scripture for that guidance which God gives His servants in answer to prayer. Whether given or received it is called "Counsel." The Spirit of Counsel as applied to the Messiah by Isaiah is that which makes Him to be called the "Counsellor" by that same prophet (Isa. ix. 6). The Spirit of Counsel, as bestowed on the Christian, is the Spirit which leads him ever to take counsel with his conscience before he acts,—prayerful *deliberation*.

We see clearly now how necessarily the Spirit of Counsel and Strength, ghostly or spiritual strength, go together!

V. and VI. "The Spirit of Knowledge and True Godliness."

The word "knowledge" here is the same word as that which is used in the ninth verse of this same chapter, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." It is the knowledge of God in which standeth or consisteth eternal life: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee" (John xvii. 3)—not knowledge about God, but knowledge of God. To know all *about* God is one thing, *to know God* is a far higher thing: and this is the fifth gift of the Spirit.

And with this is coupled "*Godliness*," or Godlikeness. To grow more and more like God is the necessary consequence of knowing Him: "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

VII. "And fill them, O Lord, with the Spirit of Thy

holy fear:" or as the original passage in Isaiah may be translated, "Fill them with the odour of Thy holy fear."

"Fear" is used here in the sense of *reverence.* The odour or incense of reverence or worship is that gift of the Spirit which will most certainly be needed through all eternity. It is the seventh and last gift of the Spirit:—"Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may worthily magnify Thy Holy Name!

Thus the seven gifts of the Spirit may be thus summed up:—

Wisdom, to choose the one thing needful.
Understanding, to know how to attain to it.
Counsel, the habit of seeking guidance of God.
Strength, to follow where He shall lead us.
Knowledge, that we may learn to know God.
Godliness, that, knowing Him, we may grow like Him.
Holy fear, meaning reverence and adoration.

It has been a familiar thought in all ages of the Church that these sevenfold gifts, or sevenfold energies, of the Holy Ghost are symbolized in the seven lamps of the golden candlestick seen by Zechariah (iv. 2); and the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God, seen by St. John (Rev. iv. 5). So the hymn sung for more than eight hundred years, before the imposition of hands in the ordination of priests:—

"Tu *septiformis* munere,
Dextræ Dei tu digitus."

or, as we have it:—

"Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy *sevenfold* gifts impart."

Once more we may here remind ourselves how closely our Service follows the order of that earliest instance of confirmation (in Acts viii. 15, 17):—

Peter and John, we there read, "prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

So now the prayer for the Holy Ghost being ended, "All of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his hand upon the head of every one severally, saying, Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom."

We may note here the prayer that those confirmed may *daily* increase in the Holy Spirit, reminding us that He is not given now once for all, but that we only begin anew this day a growth in His grace, which we hope may be daily continued.

It is our sure belief that while these words of prayer are being uttered faithfully, the whole congregation joining in the Bishop's prayer, God is that moment answering the prayer, and pouring His Holy Spirit into the heart of each one, over whose head the Bishop's fatherly hand is placed in outward sign of benediction.

We have Christ's promise:—

"How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13).

Never let us forget Who this Holy Spirit is; He is none other than the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who is at this moment "proceeding from the [illegible]nd the Son," and entering His servant's heart.

After the salutation from the Bishop to the people, "The Lord be with you," returned by the people, "And with thy spirit," follows the Lord's Prayer.

As in the Holy Communion Office, and as in the Baptismal Office, so here in the Office of Confirmation, the most sacred of all our prayers follows immediately after the central act of the service.

Then follows the Collect, almost word for word the same as that in the Prayer Book of 1549.

We observe in this Collect that the Church distinctly claims to be following the Apostles' example in this rite of Confirmation:—"These Thy servants, upon whom, *after the example of Thy holy Apostles*, we have now laid our hands." We notice, too, how clearly the significance of this act is explained: it is to certify them as by a sign of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them, that even so His Fatherly hand will be ever over them.

It has been the outward sign of benediction from the very earliest ages. So Jacob laid his hands upon Ephraim and Manasseh, so Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, and our Lord upon the little children, and again upon the Apostles at His Ascension. We are so constituted—body and spirit in such close sympathy one with the other—that words accompanied by touch affect us more strongly than words spoken merely. We all feel it. Brother grasps brother by the hand; the child kneels instinctively to receive the father's blessing.

Some thought of this kind—that body as well as soul shared in the blessing of this solemn service—seems to have moved the divines of 1661 to add here the second of the Collects which are appended to the

Communion Service. It is a prayer that God will direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts *and bodies*, that *body*, as well as soul, may be under His mighty protection.

O Almighty Lord and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of Thy laws, and in the works of Thy commandments; that through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LESSON XII.

CONFIRMATION is clearly intended to be the first act of our maturer years, not the last act of our childhood. A change takes place in all of us at the age of fourteen or fifteen. Many new desires then rise within us which in our childhood we hardly felt. We begin to desire more freedom and more knowledge, to act more for ourselves and to know more of the world around us: a feeling of dependence is natural to the child; a wish for independence is equally natural to one whose childhood is over. This wish for independence has nothing wrong in it, but it is a time of danger, a time when we need all the help that our religion can give us. It is precisely the time when we should seek Confirmation.

If children be brought to Confirmation too early, before they have felt this wish for independence and consequently increased sense of responsibility, it will probably be regarded by them as a thing their parents are responsible for, which they acquiesce in as a matter of course; one of the many things which they have been glad, all through their childhood, to leave to their parents' judgment and discretion. When they are two

or three years older, it will have become a thing of the past, grouping with many other events of their childhood, for which they now feel hardly responsible—a thing to be put away with other childish things.

Now this is most undesirable. The light of Confirmation is intended to shine forward, not backward; its vows and good resolves are to influence the coming life, not reflect merely the past life. The whole spirit and intention of the Service is frustrated unless the person confirmed regard it as his own act and deed, seeking strength of his own accord to enable him to overcome difficulties and resist temptations which he has already begun to feel.

In answer to the question "What is the best age for Confirmation?" there is perhaps no better answer than this:—When you have begun to think seriously about the business of life, and feel that you know something of its trials and difficulties, and are not afraid to make a promise which shall bind these coming years, then seek Confirmation. Less than this can hardly satisfy the Church's phrase, "being now come to years of discretion."

It is well worth while to postpone for a year or two longer the means of grace afforded by the Lord's Supper, if there be reason to believe that by such postponement we shall deepen and strengthen our desire for it for many a year to come.

The devotional life of a child of twelve or thirteen may doubtless be quickened at the time by Confirmation and admission to the Lord's Supper; but that is not the most important thing. A more important question is surely this:—When the child has passed out of his present sheltered position, and as a youth of fifteen or sixteen

is going forth into the world to contend with the world's trials and temptations, then which will be most helpful,—to have been confirmed in childhood, long ago, as it will then seem? or to have been confirmed quite recently, with all these trials and temptations consciously in view?

It is good and wholesome for all who are asking themselves whether it is not time for them to be seeking Confirmation, to turn over these thoughts and try to take this view of the question in their minds.

Assuming then that those who read these pages have so viewed Confirmation, and have deliberately and seriously sought it, as a mean of obtaining "grace to help in a time of need" which they feel to be already upon them, let us devote this last lesson to some further hints for self-examination in the matter, which may be useful both before and after receiving this holy rite.

You make yourself responsible for (1) renouncing sin; (2) for the Christian faith; (3) for obedience. These then will naturally be the three heads under which our self-examination will fall.

We will consider them in order.

I. *Renouncing Sin.* Sin, as we have seen, may be such as is due to the flesh, or to the world's temptations, or be such as the Devil's promptings only can account for.

(1) Of the first—the sins of our lower animal nature—St. Paul says:—

"The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders,

drunkenness, revellings, and such like: they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And again, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v.). And so our Lord, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 19).

It will be observed that besides sins that are obviously sensual, there are some mentioned here that do not seem at first sight so directly connected with the body, such as "hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife." But these, in many cases, arise from drinking, or some other excess. And so with the grosser forms of superstition, also included in the list, they nearly always go along with sensual indulgence of one kind or another.

We must ask ourselves also in this connexion, "What sins am I *constitutionally* most liable to?" Constitutional temperament inclines one to vanity, another to arrogance or pride; some to sloth, some to sensual indulgence; one to over-carefulness and excessive anxiety, another to carelessness; one to credulity, another to doubt and mistrust; some are naturally passionate or irritable, others peevish or sulky or morose; some are perverse or obstinate, others timid and cowardly, ashamed of the truth, yielding against conscience.

All these natural inclinations, being due in a great measure to constitutional temperament, may be grouped under this first head, and should be watchfully examined into by one who wishes to renounce the flesh.

(2) Then there are sins connected with the *world.*

Of all the temptations that beset youth perhaps the most difficult to overcome is the tendency to value the world's praise more than God's praise, to fear the world's censure more than God's censure. One reason is obvious: the world is in sight, and God is out of sight: and the proverb is apt to hold good, "Out of sight, out of mind." And yet the world is fleeting and temporary, and God and God's judgments are abiding. If we could only remember this!

We cannot too carefully observe how very strong is the language of Scripture about the world's wickedness: and by the "world" Scripture means what we in common talk call "society." To live for society and for God is serving two masters, and impossible. Let those who desire popularity consider well this text, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4).

Is any in danger of excessive love of society? Let him listen to St. John:—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15).

Those are strong words. And once more, is the praise of men your temptation? Then listen to Christ: "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 44.) Indeed, the Evangelist could only thus account for the Jews' rejection of Christ: "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John xii. 43).

In ordering our time, our expenses, our cares, our business, our company, our amusements, our

dress, it behoves us to remember these warnings of Scripture.

We must remember, too, that there are many things in the world, good in themselves, but liable to be *abused:* for example, honest industry is most praiseworthy; but it is not our only duty; it may become unchristian if it trespass on the time we owe to our fellow-Christians or to God. Many pleasures are perfectly innocent; but a life of such pleasure is sinful. Carefulness is good, but in excess it is want of faith.

(3) But in our self-examination we must remember that our chiefest enemy is an evil spirit, and that he tempts us to sin sometimes, not through society, nor through the fleshly appetites or tendencies, but directly. Murder, pride, lying, are specially ascribed to him in Holy Scripture (John viii. 44; 1 Tim. iii. 6).

Deceit is one of his favourite temptations: he tempts us to deceive others, whispering, "You will never be found out." "You may as well have the credit of being or doing so and so," when you know you deserve it not. He tempts us to deceive ourselves:—whispering that if we sin now, we can repent by and by;—or that this is but a trifle, a very little sin;—or that it is only what all the world does;—that we are no worse than our neighbours;—that we must take care not to be righteous overmuch.

Pride—This is one of the Devil's own suggestions,—self-assertion, self-complacency, self-importance, ever increasing, if not struggled against, till it becomes downright self-idolatry.

Murder you may think need hardly be a matter for self-examination; and yet is it not murderous, that

wish that enters the heart sometimes to tempt others into sin, and so perhaps injure their soul eternally? Better a thousand times that a millstone were hanged round our neck and we were drowned than so offend!

II. But our self-examination must extend to our BELIEF. By way of varying it, let us sometimes go carefully through those numerous passages of Scripture which set forth to us the several articles of our faith. The following may serve as specimens, following, as may be observed, the order of our Creed.[1]

"Thou, O Lord, hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. iv. 11). "Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth!" (Psa. cxiii. 5, 6). "By Thee have I been holden up from the womb" (Psa. lxxi. 6). "Thou art about my path and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways" (Psa. cxxxix. 2). "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14).

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "All we like sheep have gone astray—we have turned every one to His own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23).

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto

[1] This and much in this Lesson is taken very gratefully from Dr. Hawkins' *Manual for Christians*, published in 1826.

Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. . . . Be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 19-21).

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2). "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23). "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14). "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 9, 14). "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, Who is in you, Whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. vi. 11, 19). "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). "In the Lord ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 21, 22). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25). "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. v. 9). "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. v. 5).

"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11).

The above passages may help perhaps to bring home to us how deeply each article of the Creed concerns our own salvation.

III. The third head of self-examination will be OBEDIENCE. Our great danger here is lest our standard of what God requires of us be too low. There is a most dangerous error abroad, vitiating much of the popular religion of the day, a notion that Christianity consists chiefly in certain feelings,—a feeling of God's presence, of our interest in Christ, of assurance of salvation; and that when once this feeling has been attained, we are safe. So far from being safe, such an one is in the greatest danger. He has misunderstood the Scriptures and deluded himself.

Feelings are worth nothing, unless there be a continual progress in holiness. The real Christian can never be content with his degree of holiness. To him Christianity means a call to holiness. "Every man that hath this hope in Him" (in Christ) "purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). "Walk as children of light: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. v. 8, 9). "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John xiv. 21). "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii.

14). "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 15).

Nothing can be clearer than the voice of Scripture that Christ's religion requires of us far more effort after holiness than did the religion of the Law.

Ask yourselves then about your progress in these matters, in your willingness to give way to others, to think of others' happiness before your own, in your control of temper, gentleness to all, as to your purity not of act and word only but of thought, of your perfect truthfulness and accuracy in all your intercourse and dealings with your fellow-men, and as to your contentedness. Ask yourself too about your duty towards God. Am I living more for Him and in His sight; what have I done purely for Him in the last day or week, without any other motive being mixed up with it? How about my devotions—are they a pleasure and refreshment to me, or if the truth be spoken are they a rather irksome duty? Am I withholding any corner of my heart, any portion of my time, any one of my daily habits, from God? Am I consciously clinging to any practice or indulgence that I know God disapproves? Scripture declares, and my conscience allows it, that if I consciously and willingly offend in one point I am guilty of all. For it is a refusal to allow God to be supreme.

Thus our effort must be to go on from strength to strength, never resting as if we had done enough. He that rests on his oars in the Christian race is certainly carried backward, for the stream is against him. We must never forget this. There must be a "daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living," as our

Church has it in the Baptismal Office; "a daily increasing in us of God's manifold gifts of grace," as we pray in the Confirmation Service. Having learned how we ought to walk and please God, so we should abound more and more (1 Thess. iv. 1).

Defend, O Lord, us Thy servants with Thy heavenly grace, that we may continue Thine for ever; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until we come unto Thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.